

REMARKS

The Official Action of 23 March 2006 has been carefully considered and reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The claims have been amended with the cancellation of claims 1-7, 9 and 10. Claim 8 remains withdrawn from consideration as being directed to non-elected subject matter but has been amended to depend from claim 11 so as to facilitate its rejoinder pursuant to the provisions of MPEP 821.04 if and when the elected product claims are indicated to be allowable. Claims 11 and 12 remain pending and under examination in this application.

The amendments to the claims render moot all rejections except for the rejection of claims 11 and 12 under 35 USC 103(a) for alleged unpatentability over JP '013. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The claimed invention is based at least in part upon the Applicants' discovery that it is possible to achieve a resin bonded rare earth magnet with superior corrosion resistance by filling only depressions in a compression molded body of the magnet with powdered filling material and powdered thermosetting resin, and then fixing the filling material to the magnet body in the depressions by curing the thermosetting resin. By filling the depressions with a mixture of the filling material and the thermosetting resin and then **fixing** the filling material in the depressions (only) by curing the resin, it is possible solidly and stably to fix

the mixture in the depressions (only) such that the filling material will not be removed. In this way, the surface of the magnet body becomes smooth, and even when the corrosion inhibiting coat film is formed on the surface, defects such as air bubbles and pin holes will not occur in the corrosion inhibiting coat film.

In accordance with the above discovery, the invention defined by claims 11 and 12 requires that the filling material be “selectively fixed by a second thermosetting resin to the surface of the magnet body only in the depressions”. As next discussed, the cited reference does not show a filling material fixed either (1) to the surface of the magnet body by a thermosetting resin; or (2) only in the depressions.

JP09-205013 describes a bond magnet which includes a corrosion inhibiting coat film having a porous magnet body in which a gap is formed to reach a surface, a compressed body of metal powder filled and coated in the gap **and on surfaces of the porous magnet body** (see drawings of JP '013), and a resin layer such as epoxy coated on the whole surface of the magnet body including the compressed body in the gap **and on surfaces of the magnet body** (see JP '013 drawings). Clearly, the reference does not teach, and in fact teaches away from, maintaining the filling material only in the depressions (gaps).

Moreover, in JP09-205013, only metal powders are filled and coated in the gap: the reference does not show or suggest a **resin** fixing the metal powders to

the surface of the magnet body, as next discussed.

JP09-205013 discloses that aluminum powders having, for example, a thickness of between 0.1 to 1 μm , and an average particle size of 50 μm) are used as the metal powders. More specifically, the aluminum powders are filled and coated on the magnet body, and then the magnet body is set in a liquid solution of MEK (Methyl EthylKetone) to perform vibration cleaning, thereby removing the aluminum powders attached inadequately. (Significantly, aluminum powders on surfaces of the magnetic body --not in the gaps--remain attached; as shown in the JP '013 drawings).

In JP09-205013, the metal powders are filled and coated only by pressure. After performing the vibration cleaning, when the corrosion inhibiting coat film of the resin layer such as epoxy is formed, a portion of the filled and coated metal powders may peel off in JP09-205013, since a portion of the metal powders is removed by the vibration cleaning, defects such as air bubbles and pin holes may occur in the corrosion inhibiting coat film when the corrosion inhibiting coat film is formed. These defects are not present in the claimed invention, as discussed above.

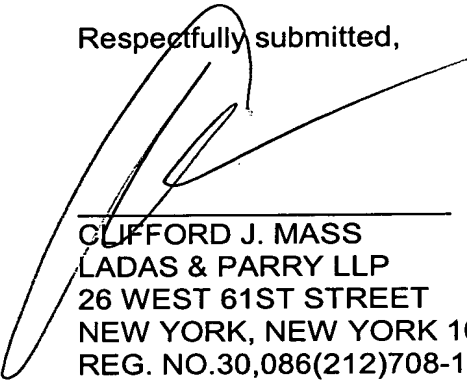
In short, JP '013 is not effective to set forth even a *prima facie* case of obviousness for the invention as defined in claims 11 and 12 because it does not show the claimed features of (1) a filling material fixed to the surface of the magnet body by a thermosetting resin; or (2) a filling material fixed only in the

depressions of a magnet body. With respect to feature (1), Applicants respectfully note that the Examiner has not even addressed this limitation. Applicants respectfully call upon the Examiner under the provisions of MPEP 2144.03 to produce a reference which shows this claimed feature or to withdraw the rejection.

With respect to feature (2), the Examiner has contended that: "given the interest of conserving material, one having ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to limit the soft metal powder taught by JP '013 to only the depressions". However, Applicants respectfully submit that this would impermissibly change the principle of operation of JP '013, wherein it is clearly intended that the filling material coats surfaces of the magnet body (in addition to filling the gap) to achieve any smoothening that may be taught therein (see JP '013 drawings). Moreover, the Examiner has respectfully not advised **how** the soft metal powder might be limited only to the gaps without impermissibly changing the principle of operation of JP '013 (see MPEP 2143.01(VI)). As discussed above, the aluminum powders in JP '013 remain attached to the surface of the magnet body --not in the gaps--even after the vibration cleaning. One of skill in the art would have had no motivation to remove them to conserve an (inexpensive) filling material. If the Examiner does not agree, Applicants respectfully call upon the Examiner under the provisions of MPEP 2144.03 to cite a reference to support the alleged motivation to modify the JP '013 reference or to withdraw the rejection.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that all rejections and objections of record have been successfully traversed and that the application is now in allowable form. An early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited and is believed to be fully warranted.

Respectfully submitted,



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